OMCs have also initiated a dialogue with both public and private sector stand-alone refiners to provide suitable trade discounts in the refinery transfer price to offset their under-recoveries.

Purchase of crude from Israel

2295. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to diversify its sources of crude supplies by using an Israeli pipeline to access crude oil from the Central Asia and Caspian Sea region to feed its fuel needs;

(b) if so, whether any agreement between India and Israel has been reached;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Russia had also proposed to use the Israeli pipeline for export of oil to Asia?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Given **the** increasing dependence on imported crude, it is the constant endeavour of the Government to diversify its sources of crude supplies. Accordingly, the possibility of using the Ashkelon-Eilat (Israeli) pipeline for crude oil that India may pick up at the Ceyhan Terminal of the Baku-Tiblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, as a supplement to the Suez Canal route, has been mooted for use, if required. While no agreement has been signed between the Government of Israel and Government of India in this regard, the oil companies will consider using Ashkelon-Eilat pipeline, subject to commercial economics, once the pipeline is made operational by the end 2005.

New policy on allotment of retail outlets

2296. SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state: